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## Berkshire Family Historian

*for family historians in the Royal County of Berkshire*

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## Old magazines *a few still need new homes*

In December's magazine Jean Herbert offered free sets of old magazines acquired through the exchange magazine scheme to which Berks FHS subscribes. Being more than seven years old they can no longer be stored in the library. Some were taken up by members but quite a few – listed below – are still on offer free to members. Chapman Codes identify the county (eg LAN = Lancashire) and the length of run, although not many runs are complete. If you are interested in taking any of these please leave a message at the Research Centre (0118 950 9553 or <jean.herbert@tiscali.co.uk> with your name, contact details and the counties you would like to have, and you will be contacted. You will either have to collect from the centre or be prepared to pay the postage, which will be worked out for you beforehand.

Avon & Bristol 24	LAN 24	SFK 25	Isle of Man 10
BDF 19	Liverpool 23	Felixstowe 24	WALES
CAM 23	Manchester 23	SSX	Glamorgan 17
CHE 25	LEI & RUT 25	Eastbourne 13	Gwynedd 13
North 25	LIN 19	Hastings 13	Clwyd 7
DBY 23	Isle of Axholme 14	WAR	SCOTLAND
ESS	MDX	Midland Anc'r 24	Aberdeen 4
Waltham Forest 20	Central 21	YRK 15	Glasgow 4
GLS 21	North 22	Doncaster 20	AUSTRALIA
HER 20	West 22	York 14	Canberra 21
HRT 23	Hillingdon 15	Sheffield 20	CANADA
HUN 4	NFK 24	Banyan Tree 23	Brit Columbia 6
KEN	NTH 24	ISLANDS	Ontario 23
Kent Connect'n 14	Peterboro' 19	Channel Isles 15	NEW ZEALAND 24
North West 21	NTT 24	Guernsey 12	TASMANIA 9

## Berkshire Burial Index *update*

The parishes and periods which have been added to the Berkshire Burial Index since publication of the fifth edition (fourth update) in November 2006 are set out below. The index now contains more than 471,000 entries.

Details of the services for researching burials in the Berkshire Burial Index are given on page 35.

**David Wright**

Abingdon St Nicholas 1704 - 1748  
 Ardington Holy Trinity 1813 - 1929  
 Ashbury St Mary 1967 - 1993  
 Buscot St Mary 1799 - 1812  
 Chilton All Saints 1667 - 1812  
 Compton Beauchamp St Swithin 1790 - 1812  
 Cranbourne St Peter 1915 - 1997  
 Didcot All Saints 1813 - 1942  
 Little Wittenham St Peter 1558 - 1679  
 Marlston St Mary 1925 - 1998  
 New Windsor St John the Baptist 1587 - 1609

Oare St Bartholomew 1854 - 1975  
 Reading London Road Cemetery (burials in consecrated ground) 1872 - 1879  
 Shinfield Cemetery 1952 - 1974  
 Stanford in the Vale St Denys 1813 - 1852  
 Thatcham St Mary 1730 - 1739  
 Wallingford St Peter 1930 - 1969  
 Wantage SS Peter & Paul 1918 - 1935  
 Wokingham St Paul 1895 - 1924  
 Wootton St Peter 1813 - 1947

## Chairman's report

Firstly I would like to thank Margaret Pyle for starting off our Berkshire Christening Index. Unfortunately she is unable to continue this valuable work. Thank you, Margaret, for all that you have done. If this project is to continue we will need a new Christening Index co-ordinator. If you have knowledge of Excel and could fill this role, please contact Sue Cummings, our projects co-ordinator on <s.cummings@ntlworld.com> or phone the Research Centre on 0118 950 9553 for further details.

Our bookshop team of Jacky Holcombe and Hilary Roberts are also stepping down in April. I'm sure you would all like to join me in thanking them for the efficient way they have run the bookshop over the past six years. We will also need to fill this post. If you would like more information about this position please contact Ivan Dickason on

<ivan@dickason.co.uk>.

With so many Berkshire wills stored in the Wiltshire Record Office, our society decided in 1998 to contribute to the WRO Wills Project. I'm delighted to report that the index went live in December 2006. Now you can search the catalogue online and purchase any will that is of interest to you, See

<<http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/heritage/>>.

Again I would like to thank all who contribute to the smooth running of Berks FHS, thus helping others to enjoy our fascinating hobby.



**Jocie McBride**  
Chairman

## TWO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### ***Bookshop manager***

Berkshire Family History Enterprises Ltd is looking for a manager to take responsibility for the society's bookshop, which sells books and CDs at Yeomanry House, at family history fairs, by mail order and through the online sales system. The manager finds and buys materials about Berkshire and nearby counties, and manages the computerised stock control system. The job may be appropriate for two people working together. If you are interested in this challenging post, or if you would like more information, please contact Ivan Dickason on 0118 978 6785 or by e-mail at <ivan@dickason.co.uk> or by post to One Mower Close, Wokingham, Berks RG40 1RZ.

### ***Project leader for Berkshire Christening Index***

A project leader is needed for the Berkshire Christening Index. The job involves co-ordinating the work of volunteers who transcribe the registers, distributing fiche, checking and record-keeping. The work can be done at home if the person has a computer and fiche reader, or at Yeomanry House where the equipment is provided. For further details please contact Sue Cummings on <s.cummings@ntlworld.com>, or leave a message for her on 0118 950 9553.

## Branch lines

***Continuing the series begun in June 2006, Peter Francis encourages members to further their digital skills through the society's Computer Branch.***



Members of many family history societies around the country are familiar with the concept of local branches, enabling members in large counties to attend meetings of interest within reasonable reach of their homes. Members of the Berkshire Family History Society are especially privileged in having a specialist Computer Branch, with the aim of encouraging the wider use of the computer as a tool for family history research and as a medium for storage, manipulation, analysis and display of relevant information.

The Computer Branch holds a series of monthly meetings with as wide a range of topics as possible, and also ensures that on most Tuesday evenings there are some computer experts in attendance at the Research Centre in Reading. Seminars on basic computer topics have been held in the past and, following a membership survey in early 2007 as to which topics would be most popular, consideration is being given to re-opening these events.

The branch has formally been in existence since the spring of 2004, but for a few months before then an informal group of computer enthusiasts within the society had arranged meetings at St Peter's church hall in Earley. Since those early days the branch has moved to a larger venue in Woodley, where our regular meetings draw from 30 to 60 members. The venue has internet access, so online demonstrations are a feature of some meetings.

The programme of meetings reflects the fact that usage of a computer requires some basic knowledge, some peripheral equipment, and some courage. Topics covered include: presentations of widely available family history software; use of the internet; information on websites that are a source of family history data; presentations from statutory bodies and commercial companies

that hold data of interest; demonstrations of peripherals such as scanners and multimedia devices; help with the recovery of valuable family photographs using image processing software; and discussions on more technical subjects such as computer security, data storage, and the use of basic software such as word-processors and spreadsheets. Every year the branch committee attempts to find some new topics but, because of the growth in the use of computers among family historians, there will always be a repeat of basic topics to ensure that newcomers are encouraged to attend.

The members attending branch meetings fall into several categories, which can be summarised as the expert, the frequent but non-expert user (which includes the branch chairman) and the novice. Our speakers are aware of this, and their presentations are accordingly pitched at a level that all can follow. After the formal presentation a very active question time is a feature of branch meetings. It is then that the real value of the branch meeting becomes apparent, since questions tend to reflect the wide spectrum of knowledge among the members; question time thus provides a means of education that the chairman for one has found to be informative and useful.

So, are you an expert, a frequent but non-expert user, or a novice? In whatever category you believe yourself to be, there is much to gain from coming to the branch meetings, where you will find a warm welcome and many members with a similar level of experience. Details of meetings are on the back cover of the magazine and on the website. The venue is easily found, with plenty of free parking.

Be brave and give it a try!

## Berkshire Record Office *recent acquisitions*

Berkshire Record Office has recently acquired microfilm copies of Bishop's Transcripts of Berkshire parish registers from the early seventeenth century up to 1836. Until recently it was only possible to see these documents at the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, because the Berkshire archdeaconry came under the diocese of Salisbury until 1836, when it was transferred to Oxford. Post-1836 transcripts are held at the Oxfordshire Record Office.

A project to catalogue the Ordnance Survey National Grid maps for Berkshire is now complete, allowing access to more than 1,200 maps previously unavailable at the BRO. This is a wonderful resource for researching local, house or family history, as it covers a fairly modern period in a geographic and visual way. Included in the collection are 1870s-1880s town plans for Abingdon, Newbury and Reading at scale 1:500 (c 120in/1 mile) as well as the following Berkshire maps:

- 1:1250 (c 50 in/1 mile) 1950s-1980s
- 1:2500 (c 25 in/1 mile) 1950s-1970s
- 1:10,000 (c 6 in/1 mile) 1960s-1970s
- 1:25,000 (c 2.5 in/1 mile) 1980s

Family historians will be excited by the discovery of a hitherto unknown parish register for Peasemore (D/P92). The register covers baptisms 1804-1812, burials 1805-1812, and one marriage in 1804. The volume had subsequently been used to keep accounts. The parish has also deposited the marriage register for 1837-1986.

- Charlton marriage registers 1957-1999 (D/P143B), and Maidenhead St Peter (D/P184)
- Records of Shinfield and St Sebastian's (in Wokingham Without) cemeteries (DC/WO)
- Photographs of Fair Mile Hospital taken in 2001 (D/EX1678)
- Records of Binfield Park Hospital (D/H9) and Church Hill House, Bracknell, based in the former Easthampstead Workhouse (D/H8) (including the workhouse admission register 1929-1933)
- Printed calendars of prisoners tried at Newbury Borough Quarter Sessions 1946-1959, with one for 1939 (D/EX1938)
- Papers relating to compulsory purchase of slum areas in Coley in the 1930s (D/EX1965)
- Official records of Chaddleworth Parish Council (CPC32)
- Property deeds from Hurst (D/EX1978), Newbury and Thatcham (D/EX1907) and Wantage, Charlton and Grove (D/EX1963)
- Combe manor estate records 1920-1972 (D/EX1725)
- Sale catalogues for the Hillfields estate in Burghfield, 1892 (D/EX1940), 9 Peascod Street, Windsor 1912 (D/EX1968), and the Buckhold estate in Bradfield and adjoining parishes 1932 (D/EX1956)
- Some very early twentieth-century publicity leaflets from Reading biscuit makers Huntley and Palmer's (D/EX1970)
- Records of Reading Road Club 1937-1947 (D/EX1971)
- Records of the Wokingham branch of the Operative Bricklayers' Society 1919-1924 (D/EX1961)

***The society's next five-week course of evening classes in family history will be held in the autumn 2007.***

***Details will be announced in the June 2007 Berkshire Family Historian.***

## Vestry book bought with help from Berks and Oxon FHSs

***Peter Durrant  
of the Berkshire Record Office celebrates a  
recent purchase which adds to the parish  
archives of Wallingford***

With the help of Berkshire and Oxfordshire family history societies towards the purchasing cost, the Berkshire Record Office has just acquired a lost vestry minutes book for the parish of St Leonard, Wallingford.

Covering the period 1819-1853, it is full of information about support for the poor of the parish. The first entry records approval for the purchase of a change of linen and a new pair of shoes each for Mrs Watkin's son and daughter, and there are similar entries throughout the next 15 years. In January 1821 William Readings was allowed 7s a week during his illness, and his daughter was allowed a second-hand pair of shoes; in May he was allowed some calico to make a change of clothes for his children. He appears to have died during the year, for in September his widow was allowed a pair of "list shoes". In December Mrs Fountain's daughter was given a pair of shoes, a gown and a bonnet so that she could go to Fulham: no reason is given, but one can perhaps conjecture that she was going into service. In 1820 Mrs North was allowed "a few necessary articles of furniture" for a room that she had taken; 15 months later she was allowed a pair of stockings for each of her children.

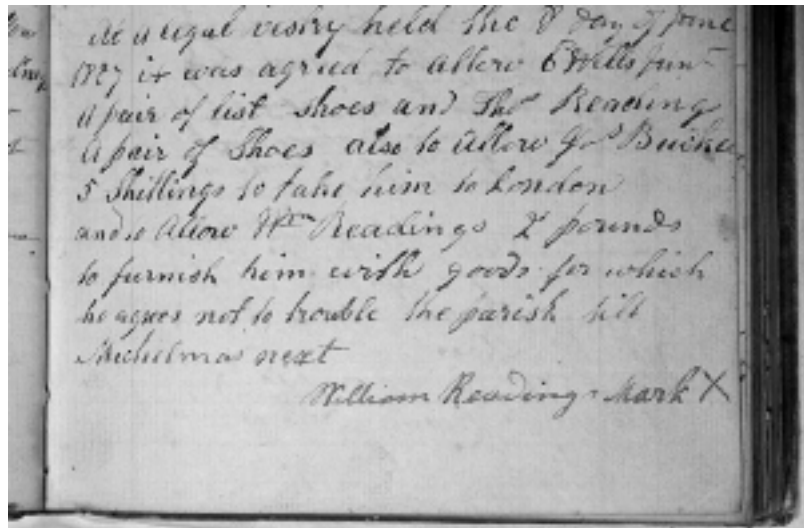
The general health of the parish poor was provided for by an agreement, copied into the front of the book, between the parish officers and Robert Clark and Son, for the Clarks to attend the sick poor in the parish, "in all professional cases whatsoever ... excepting



cases of small pox, cow pox, or the vagrant poor" for which they were to be paid £9 a year; the parish separately employed and paid a midwife. At a special meeting in 1831 it was agreed, in consequence of smallpox in the town, to apply to Mr Greening to vaccinate the children of paupers "on the earliest opportunity" – but also, with due regard for economy – "on the lowest terms the overseers can agree with him". Employment for the poor was provided – in 1830 it was agreed that men in the parish should start work at 9 o'clock and continue till dark during the winter, or not be entitled to pay.

But it is not just the poor that we find in these pages. There was a perpetual problem with flooding in Goldsmiths Lane, and at one point the vestry was obliged to threaten legal action against one John Jones whom they seemed to regard as responsible for the problem. The state of the churchyard also caused concern, and following complaints in 1847 it was resolved that Mr Havergal be told to keep his fowl somewhere else. More positively, there is a record of celebrations following the beating of the bounds in 1840, when 18 gallons of beer (supplied by Mr Hedges) and 20s worth of buns (supplied by Mr James Gammon) were given away in the Old Moor Common, although the story is slightly spoiled by a subsequent complaint that

a page from the  
Wallingford Vestry Book  
detailing allocations to  
parishioners



20s for the buns had been a mistake, as 10s would have been quite ample.

The discovery of this book is especially welcome as it fills a gap in the record. The last of the extant overseers' account books for the parish ends in 1820, and the next (and

previously the only known) vestry book starts in 1853. Together with overseers' and vestry books for the other two Wallingford parishes, this helps us find out a little more about the town and its people in the early nineteenth century.

## Dates for your diary

date	event	venue	more details
10.00-16.00 Sun 11 Mar	Dorset FHS open day	Poole Grammar School Gravel Hill	<a href="http://www.dorsetfhs.org.uk">www.dorsetfhs.org.uk</a>
10.15-16.00 Sat 24 Mar	Sussex FH Group conference	Clair Hall Perrymount Rd Haywards Heath	<a href="http://www.sfhg.org.uk">www.sfhg.org.uk</a>
14.00-15.30 Mon 16 Apr	introductory visit to Berkshire Record Office	Berkshire Record Office Coley Ave Reading	0118 901 5132
10.00-17.00 Sun 22 Apr	South Coast FH Fair	Pavilion Theatre Marine Parade Worthing	<a href="http://www.familyhistoryfairs.com">www.familyhistoryfairs.com</a>
10.00- 7.00 Sat 5-Mon 7 May	Society of Genealogists Family History Show	National Hall, Olympia, London	<a href="http://www.sog.org.uk">www.sog.org.uk</a>
Sun 13 May	Kent FH fair	Market Hall, Lockmeadow Hart St off Barker Rd Maidstone	<a href="http://www.familyhistoryfairs.com">www.familyhistoryfairs.com</a>

## Limited access granted to 1911 census under Freedom of Information Act

Following a recent decision by the Information Commissioner under the Freedom of Information Act, The National Archives (TNA) is to speed up the process of digitising the 1911 census. TNA now hopes to offer a digitised, searchable index in 2009, with-holding only "key sensitive information"

under the 10-year practice, ie, until 2012.

The commissioner's decision obliges TNA to respond to requests before 2009, but until full digitisation this will be limited to enquiries which can supply the full address.

For full details of the pre-2012 service go to <[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census)>.

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## FamilyHistoryOnline update

*FamilyHistoryOnline* announced the addition of more than one million new records at the end of 2006. The new databases are: East Surrey 1891 census indexes for Croydon, Godstone, Lingfield and Richmond • East Surrey 1851 census index for Godstone • East Surrey burials for Lambeth.

The following databases have been updated: Unfilmed 1851 census for areas of Manchester, including Chorlton, London Road, Rusholme

and Greengate in Salford • memorial inscriptions for Somerset • Dorset baptisms, marriages, burials and memorial inscriptions • Derbyshire civil registration indexes for births, deaths and marriages • UK people found overseas • National Burial Index for Cardiganshire, South Durham, Essex, Herefordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk, West Surrey, Wiltshire and Yorkshire.

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## Surname index goes online

The Society of Genealogists recently made available online the index to its Surname Document Collection. The collection comprises original documents such as BMD certificates, deeds, wills, marriage licences and settlements, apprenticeship indentures, letters, transcripts of wills, parish register entries, family trees and other research notes.

The index is an A-Z listing of all surnames

included in the Surname Document Collection. The listings may be consulted at <[www.sog.org.uk/library/surnames\\_intro.shtml](http://www.sog.org.uk/library/surnames_intro.shtml)>.

The index does not itemise material available on any one surname. This may be identified via the society's search and copy service, described on

<[www.sog.org.uk/library/searches.shtml](http://www.sog.org.uk/library/searches.shtml)>.

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## Origins 1841 census now complete

With the addition of Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire, Carmarthenshire, Cumberland, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Pembrokeshire and Islands (Alderney, Guernsey, Herm, Jersey, Jethon, Calf of Man, Isle of Man, Sark) the 1841 England and Wales census is now complete on the Origins Network, and brings the final 1841 name

count online to over 15,790,000 records.

With competition from other pay-per-view census websites hotting up, the Origins Network claims that its 1841 census index is the most accurate and complete available. See <[www.originsnetwork.com/help/popup-aboutbo-census1841-accuracy.htm](http://www.originsnetwork.com/help/popup-aboutbo-census1841-accuracy.htm)> for details.



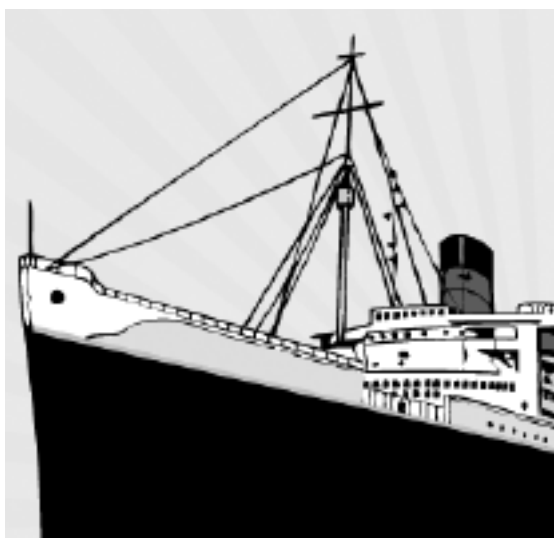
## All aboard new passenger database

Records of 30 million passengers on ships sailing to worldwide destinations are being digitised for the very first time by Findmypast.com and The National Archives. The result will be Ancestorsonboard, a website featuring outward passenger lists for long-distance voyages leaving the British Isles from 1890 to 1960.

These Board of Trade listings include long-haul voyages from all British ports, all Irish ports before partition in 1921, and all Northern Irish ports after partition, to destinations outside Europe. While Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa and USA feature strongly, all continents are covered.

Currently, these documents are only available to view at Kew. They are indexed by UK port and date of departure, but not by name. This means that it is almost impossible to find particular individuals unless you already know exactly when and from where they travelled. Current estimates put 30 million passengers in the records, but the final figure will only be discovered when digitisation has been completed.

Many of the passengers were British emigrants. An estimated 125,000 British people emigrated to USA, 50,000 to Canada and 25,000 to Australia every year between 1890 and 1914. After 1918 emigration continued, but with a changed emphasis: Australia became a more popular destination. These voyages often called at additional ports



en route, including those in Europe, and any passengers disembarking at these stops are included.

Not all passengers were British emigrants: there were also businessmen, diplomats and tourists, and many European trans-migrants. These people began their journeys in continental Europe and came to Britain to catch a cheaper sailing to their final destination such as the USA.

There is no single, standard format to the lists, which vary in size and length. They changed over time, and different shipping lines had their own pre-printed forms. Some record only a minimum of detail about the passengers whilst others include a wealth of information down to exact address and ultimate destination overseas.

Records will be rolled out on <[www.ancestorsonboard.com](http://www.ancestorsonboard.com)> over the next few months. Images of the passenger lists will be available on a pay-per-view basis to download, view, save and print.

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## WDYTYA to go live at Olympia

The BBC TV series *Who Do You Think You Are?* is to be featured live at the Society of Genealogists' Family History Show at the National Hall, Olympia on 5-7 May 2007. The line-up of popular historians is promised to include Nick Barratt, Else Churchill, Michael Gandy and Jonathan Foyle. The society hopes that this will make the show its biggest ever.

## The Paynes of Milton

*The lives of ordinary people are too often restricted to records of birth, marriage and death. When Irene Franklin (2268) went searching for her grand-father George Allen Payne, she was fortunate enough to find his family noted in the diary of the vicar (probably the Rev Charles Clerke) of Milton, near Abingdon. The entries are enigmatically brief, but nonetheless the diary offers a tantalising glimpse into the hardships of Victorian village life.*

As the youngest of a large family I knew very little about my grandparents, but I knew that my grandfather George Allen Payne was born at Milton, near Abingdon. It took me some time to find his birth certificate, as he had been registered as Paine. Some years ago I visited Milton, and found on the church noticeboard the name of a researcher, whom I contacted. She led me to a wealth of information from the diary of the local vicar, who conscientiously recorded his parochial duties over several decades from 1847. The following extracts show his involvement with the Payne family.

### 1847

12 Jan: Payne's wife prematurely confined and infant died without baptism.  
23 Jan: Payne's wife alarmingly ill. Agnew found in conversation that she had not been baptised by a lawful minister of the church, so baptised her conditionally.  
24 Jan: Payne's wife Elizabeth dangerously ill and prayed for in church.  
31 Jan: Elizabeth Payne continues delirious.  
2 Feb: Agnew administered Holy Sacraments.  
18 Feb: Elizabeth Payne buried.  
15 Nov: William Payne and Sophia Orchard married.

### 1848

24 Dec: William Payne and Sophia's child baptised.

### 1850

1 Dec: William Payne's child christened George Allen Payne.

### 1851\*

(List of children at school: 94 including no.22 Payne)

18 Mar: Visited Payne.  
28 Apr: Visited Payne to speak of confirmation.

### 1855

2 Feb: Visited Payne to see if anything can be done for William Payne's baby by getting relief at Oxford Infirmary. William Payne very humble because of refund remittance to Coal Club.  
18 Apr: William Payne's child sick with scarletina.

### 1856

7 Oct: Visited Payne.

17 Oct: Mrs Payne's baby ill.

### 1857

23 Feb: Visited Payne with sherry and eggs for little burnt child.  
24 Feb: Beef tea for little Payne.  
25 Feb: Visited Louisa Payne.  
26 Feb: Visited Louisa Payne.  
2 Mar: Visited Emma Payne.  
4 Mar: Portwine for Emma Payne.  
14 Mar: Went to Payne's with calves' foot jelly.  
26 Mar: Visited Payne's children.

### 1858

21 Jan: Mrs Payne heard that Jacob Hutchinson has had coal and thinks she should have some. I explained that Mrs Hutchinson had been churched and this was the reason.  
3 May: Mrs Payne 5s towards payment of doctor's bill for burnt child.

### 1859

3 Mar: Church George and Louisa Payne.  
7 Apr: Catechised George and Louisa Payne.  
24 Aug: Called at Payne's house shut up.  
10 Dec: Mrs Payne confined last night baby premature with convulsions.  
21 Dec: Visited Mrs Payne.  
24 Dec: Gave prizes in boys' school George Payne for good conduct.  
31 Dec: Buried Payne's baby 3pm.

### 1860

2 Jan: Called to see George Payne ill with measles.  
5 Jan: Visited Paynes – children ill.  
14 Mar: Called on Mrs Payne about George being



left, George Allen Payne and below, the school at Milton



in choir and having clothes.

8 Apr: George Payne had new clothes at choirister today.

13 May: Choir practice in church.

**1861**

9 Mar: Coal Club William Payne four shillings.

9 Apr: Took the six choir boys and George Gardiner to Oxford for a treat, they visited the new museum, the Martyrs Memorial at the top of Ratcliffe Gt Tor, Botanical Gardens, the [?] barge and concluded our day by attending afternoon chapel at Magdalen College.

14 Jun: Mrs Payne was confined last Sunday with a little girl.

14 July: Archdeacon baptised Payne's baby – Elizabeth Sophia. Mrs Payne churched.

**1862**

27 Mar: Mrs Payne's child [?] a tremendous storm and rain all night.

**1863**

20 Jul: Visit Payne.

**1864**

20 Jan: Mrs Payne.

11 Feb and 16 Mar: Lucy Payne.

13 Mar: Mrs Payne – club.

27 Jul: Mrs Payne about baptism of her child.

**1865**

12 Feb: Choir boys continue to be troublesome, spoken to them several times.

13 Apr: Funeral of William Orchard Payne.

**1866**

23 Jan: About confirmation Payne.

23 Feb: George Payne for confirmation.

23 Feb: Paid George Payne for choir service £1. Receipt for Milton choir clothing.

19 May: 4 Russel-card coats and vests £4 14s od, 4 caps 4s 2d, 4 collars 3s od.

**1867**

30 Jun: Only John Payne and F Kimpall to represent choir.

18 Jul: George Payne at Milton for his holiday.

21 July: Baptism Rose Caroline Sarah Payne.

25 Aug: Visit John Payne who fell from one of Mr Coombe's horses Sat night.

**1868**

24 Mar: Visit Mrs Payne to ask why her son did not arrive for choir practice.

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The diary continued until 1870, by which time George had been apprenticed to a Mr Joseph King, a church organ-builder (and also landlord of the New Inn). The church paid his £10 apprenticeship fees. In 1880 he came to London seeking work, and there met and married my grandmother, Alice Hunter Jenkins. The 1881 census finds them living in Camberwell with daughter Ethel.

\* The 1851 census finds William Payne, carpenter aged 31, born in Goring, head of household in Milton, with wife Sophia aged 26, born Draycot (Wilts), and children Martha 6, Emma Louisa 2 and George Allen 6 months.

# Wartime evacuation of mothers and babies to Berkshire

*Gillian Clark  
details the part played by Berkshire  
in organising care for unmarried  
mothers during the Second World  
War*

The story of the evacuation of unmarried expectant mothers to Berkshire during the Second World War has, unlike that of the children sent to the county, not yet been told.<sup>1</sup> This article looks at Berkshire's part in a national scheme to move single women from danger areas and to create new homes to accommodate them. This was for their own safety, and because there was diminishing provision in London as raids put lying-in hospitals out of action. Arrangements were made for single mothers separately from married ones because of the stigma of illegitimacy, and because their needs for before and after care were much greater.

This account also highlights the connection between these wartime evacuations, the records of the baptisms of the children of single women in the county's registers and the adoptions that followed some of the illegitimate births. Tracing adoption records and birth families can be a challenging task, made more difficult when the birth took place far from the mother's home and when unconnected agencies were involved in stages along the way. Any evidence is valuable that puts another link in the chain of single mother, agency providing before or after support to her, place of birth, address on birth certificate and the adoption agency that placed her child.

Mother and baby homes were small units for unmarried mothers who needed somewhere away from home to give birth to a first illegitimate child. Girls stayed for a few weeks before the birth of their baby and for a few

weeks afterwards, either returning home with the baby, finding a job where they could have the child with them or parting with it to foster parents or for adoption. The proportion of children adopted from homes was high, as it was the mothers who lacked support or who had chosen adoption as an outcome who were admitted to them in the first place.

The shelters, homes and hostels for mother and child were managed by statutory health and welfare bodies or by voluntary agencies on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the free churches, the Church Army, Salvation Army and other charities. They were run in the Church of England by the moral welfare teams within the dioceses. The principal voluntary provider in Berkshire was the Church of England through the Oxford Diocesan Council for Moral Welfare (ODCMW), and this covered the counties of Berks, Bucks and Oxon with individual teams active, as in all dioceses, at the subsidiary level of deanery or parish.

In 1939 Berkshire was designated as a reception area. The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child (NCUMC) was asked that year by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to draw up lists of maternity homes, and then the agencies running them were approached to ask if their homes might act as Emergency Maternity Homes (EMHs) for married and single women. Maternity homes were by definition those where confinements took place on site, as opposed to mother and baby homes where confinements took place in hospital, although the latter term is now used

generically. Most of the big organisations were unable to help, but one home in the ODCMW area, Putnam House at Aylesbury, offered places. In areas where there were no suitable homes to be designated as EMHs the government prepared to set them up. The vice president of the NCUMC, Alice Jenkins, the Reading Borough Council representative, was asked by the MoH to take a personal interest in the scheme, and to see if unmarried girls might be welcome in Reading.<sup>2</sup>

The first local preparations began in March 1940, when premises in Murdoch Rd, Wokingham, were adapted for 14 mothers and babies for the period immediately after the lying-in, the home to be staffed by the Mothercraft Training Society and administered by Berkshire County Council (BCC). The unit was called Eboracum, and the plan was to use it for mothers transferred from Berkshire EMHs who had trouble with feeding or whose babies were debilitated.<sup>3</sup>

In November that year the county medical officer was called to equip Rashleighs at Pinkneys Green in Maidenhead as an EMH with the help of the Red Cross Society. In July 1941 the council undertook responsibility for

this ante-natal hostel and for one at Blewbury (Fieldside) for evacuee expectant mothers, and it considered the repairs and alterations necessary at White Lodge, Maidenhead.<sup>4</sup>

Baptisms of the children of single mothers from Eboracum, 1 Murdoch Rd, in the register of All Saints Wokingham in 1941 indicate that that the home was already open at this date. Despite the original plan for its use, it was taking any evacuated girl. By 1943 (and probably earlier) there was a system running with other mother-and-baby or maternity homes being linked to ante-natal or after-care hostels in the Oxford diocesan area to take girls sent by London County Council (LCC). Pairs of homes were The Grange and Wymers Hostel at High Wycombe, The Grove (75 Surley Rd) and Ashcroft Hostel (90 Albert Rd) at Caversham, and Rashleighs and White Lodge Hostel at Maidenhead. Shardloes at Amersham was a unit not linked to a hostel.<sup>5</sup> Two other EMHs were Upton Lodge at Blewbury and St Peter's at Frilford, and there was a later one at Folly Farm at Sulhamstead used by Southampton, Portsmouth and towns on the Kent coast when flying bombs increased the risk in these places.<sup>6</sup>

*Rashleighs at Pinkneys Green in Maidenhead*



Problems were reported to the LCC in 1941 by the moral welfare committee of the archdiocese of Westminster concerning girls being sent by it to the Oxford diocese. The committee usually recommended evacuation from London for mothers because of their age, because they were ineligible for other homes when expecting a second or third illegitimate child, or because they did not present themselves until too late into their pregnancy to make other arrangements. These were often Irish girls who had no family or home in the country, and who therefore needed after-care accommodation, but for whom the Oxford diocesan moral welfare workers could not provide billets. This was a real issue which became more acute as the war continued, because the success of the entire evacuation scheme rested with these welfare workers and their ability to find accommodation for girls after they left the hostels. The Oxford diocese had been selected by the government in the first place because it was well provided with moral welfare workers.<sup>7</sup>

In 1943 the system was under pressure from the high wartime illegitimacy rate with LCC needing 10 places a week in Berkshire. Arrangements were made to link Ruskin College, Oxford with Eboracum Hostel in Wokingham and with Lindsaye Hostel at

Woking to provide five of these places, with the existing pairs of homes to take one per week each. However the minister, Florence Horsbrugh, was under the misapprehension that Eboracum was available to any single girl, and that it was not fully used and should be closed. She received a strong letter from Marjorie Brierley, the Oxford diocesan worker for Sonning deanery and Windsor, pointing out that Eboracum was for evacuated girls only and not for local girls or those from other areas.<sup>8</sup> She asked Miss Horsbrugh to use her influence to change this, and received a reply that it would be used to the utmost for unmarried girls from London. It was additionally used under a scheme with BCC where eligible unmarried mothers were admitted to Eboracum from any EMH in the region. The Berkshire county treasurer reported that in 1942-43 there had been 49 cases staying for 1,790 patient days (about five weeks each) at Eboracum at a cost of 11s 6d per patient day, with only 9d of this offset from patient contributions.

Dr Donaldson at the MoH in Bath Rd was asked if Reading could take any further unmarried girls, but Miss Coles and Miss Caley of the ODCMW said there were insufficient billets for them, and the LCC had to accept this. There were sufficient local cases

*Miss Halliday's Babies' Home (Chiltern Nursery) in Peppard Road, Caversham*



to fill Slough and District Girls' Home and the Princess Christian Residential Nursery in Windsor, the kind of units that were now so badly needed.

The EMHs closed after the war, but the Grove at Caversham continued as a maternity unit. They were in addition to the existing local provision for single mothers among which, over a period of years, included Wychcotes ante-natal hostel in St Peter's Avenue, Caversham; Miss Halliday's Babies' Home (Chiltern Nursery) in Peppard Road, Caversham; St Monan's maternity home, Erleigh Road, Reading; St Monica's Home, Russell St, Reading; Berkshire County Home run by Portsmouth Catholic Social Services Council and Burnell House, both in Windsor.<sup>9</sup> Single women were sometimes given beds in units that usually took only married women: Hill's Nursing Home, Cressingham Road; Dellwood Nursing Home, Liebenrood Road; and Battle Hospital, all in Reading.

The stigma of illegitimacy made it likely that the intake of any home was from outside the area, but that the registration of the births, the baptisms and the adoption arrangements (but not necessarily the adoption placements) for the babies during the war and in peacetime would most likely have been made where the birth took place. Adoptions of the babies of girls from London and the south coast in EMHs in Berkshire may have been through

London or Berkshire councils or through Roman Catholic or, bearing in mind the involvement of the diocese, Anglican voluntary agencies.

There were 187,000 confinements of married and single women in EMHs during the war. Illegitimacy was at its highest in 1945 with 63,000 births (26,000 in 1939) and adoptions peaked at 21,000 in 1946 (7,000 in 1939). In 1943 there were 19 registered adoption societies, and in 1946 there were 45 as well as a number of unofficial societies set up during the war.

For those interested in any of the Berkshire or other mother and baby homes, welfare and adoption agencies in the UK, information on any records still extant can be found online at a site set up in 2005 by the British Association for Adoption and Fostering:

<[www.adoptionsearchreunion.co.uk](http://www.adoptionsearchreunion.co.uk)>. This holds the material from the standard reference work on adoption records, Georgina Stafford's book *Where to find adoption records*, updated with much new material. Anyone considering a search for their own records or for a birth family member separated from them by adoption should contact their local social services department for help and advice, and read the article by Alison Vincent titled *Adopted? How to find out more about your history* in this journal in December 2003.<sup>10</sup>

1 Lyndsey McCormack. Interested in World War 2? *Berkshire Echo* issue 34 Winter 2005 /06 p1

2 The National Archives, HLG 7/307, Evacuation. Mothers and young children: evacuation arrangements for unmarried mothers 1939-43

3 Berkshire County Council minutes, Public Health Committee, March 1941

4 BCC minutes, July 1941

5 Georgina Stafford. *Where to find adoption records*. BAAF 2001. Shardloes was used by Queen Charlotte's and other hospitals 1939-45 as Emergency Maternity Hospital. Births registered in Beaconsfield.

6 Council papers refer to an ante-natal hostel at Blewbury and a maternity home called Frilford House. The names of Fieldside, Upton Lodge and St Peter's were provided by Mark Stevens of the BRO. Folly Farm information from a mother whose was sent there from Southampton.

7 S M Ferguson and H Fitzgerald. *History of the Second World War*. Studies in the Social Services, HMSO and Longman, 1954 p105

8 ODCMW teams during the war period: Miss Coles Diocesan House 88 St Aldates Oxford, Reading Branch at St Monica's Russel St Reading where Miss West was superintendent. The Wokingham office was at 41b Denmark St and the Newbury one at the Congregational Hall in Northbrook St.

9 See the register of St John's Caversham for baptisms of babies from the Chiltern Nursery and the Grove Maternity Home.

10 Thanks are due to Julia Feast of British Association for Adoption and Fostering and to Alyson Graham and Alison Vincent of the Berkshire Adoption Advisory Service for advice and help.

## Landowners and tenants in a changing landscape

***Jonathan Brown***  
*of the Museum of Rural Life wrote in these pages last year about the hierarchy of farm occupations. Here he looks at the pattern of farmland ownership and tenancy in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.*

Directories and parish census returns show that in many villages farmers were often the biggest group in the trading and professional classes. Elsewhere, if not the biggest, they were generally amongst the leading groups of the parish. This situation prevailed until well into the twentieth century, despite declining numbers of farmers.

That decline impacted from the late nineteenth century onwards, as the agricultural depression and other economic development caused some to leave farming, and discouraged others from taking it up. There were 1,988 farmers in Berkshire according to the census for 1861. By 1891 the number was down to 1,486, and by 1911 down to 1,347.

Most of these farmers were men: 165 (17 per cent) of the 1,988 total in 1861 were women. Almost all of those would have been widows, technically holding the farm on behalf of a son yet to come of age. Most of the farmers also were married: 1,294 (65 per cent) in 1861. Most of those without a wife would have been widowers. On the whole, landowners were not keen to let to a single farmer, and for most farmers the marriage partnership was a practical and working one.

Those census figures alone reveal relatively little, for farmers were far from being a heterogeneous group. The figures for farm sizes present a sharply tapering pyramid, with a small number of large holdings and a great number of small ones. In 1875 the returns showed:

10 farm holdings of more than 1,000 acres  
395 of between 300 and 1,000 acres  
643 of between 100 and 300 acres  
and 2,983 of fewer than 100 acres.

There were more than twice as many farms as there were farmers. Part of the explanation is that many of the smallest holdings (less than 50 acres) were held by people not reckoned as farmers, something to which we shall return. At the same time there were many farmers with more than one farm holding. This affected all sizes of farm holding, from the small to very large.

Some farmers had vast acreages under their command as a result. George Baylis of Wyfield Manor near Newbury, built up a farming enterprise of several thousand acres on the Downs: with 3,440 acres it was already large in 1896, but by 1917 there were 12,140 acres. Baylis was a particularly striking example, unusual in the extent of his farm enterprise, but he was far from the only one to hold large farms in multiple. Berkshire may broadly be said to be a county of large-scale farming. To take the 1875 returns of farm sizes again, but this time for acreages, 54 per cent of the total acreage was in holdings of more than 300 acres, 32 per cent in the middling farms of 100 to 300 acres, and 14 per cent in small farms.

At the upper reaches of the farming ladder were those men controlling great acreages. There were not many of them. The scale of their activities set them apart from most farmers. They could have considerable wealth, even in times of great difficulty for cereal growing on the Berkshire Downs, where many of them were based. They also had social standing locally – not on a par with landowners, not even with those whose estates were smaller than the holdings these greater farmers cultivated – but of considerable



degree even so. These farmers could maintain a decent riding stable, might own a carriage, and their womenfolk no longer needed to spend so much time on the work of the farm. All of that earned them the disapprobation of writers such as Richard Jefferies, who regarded farming as needing above all hands-on attention from its practitioners. The sons, brothers and nephews of this class of farmer were likely to enter the professional classes as land agents, lawyers or clergymen if they did not go into farming.

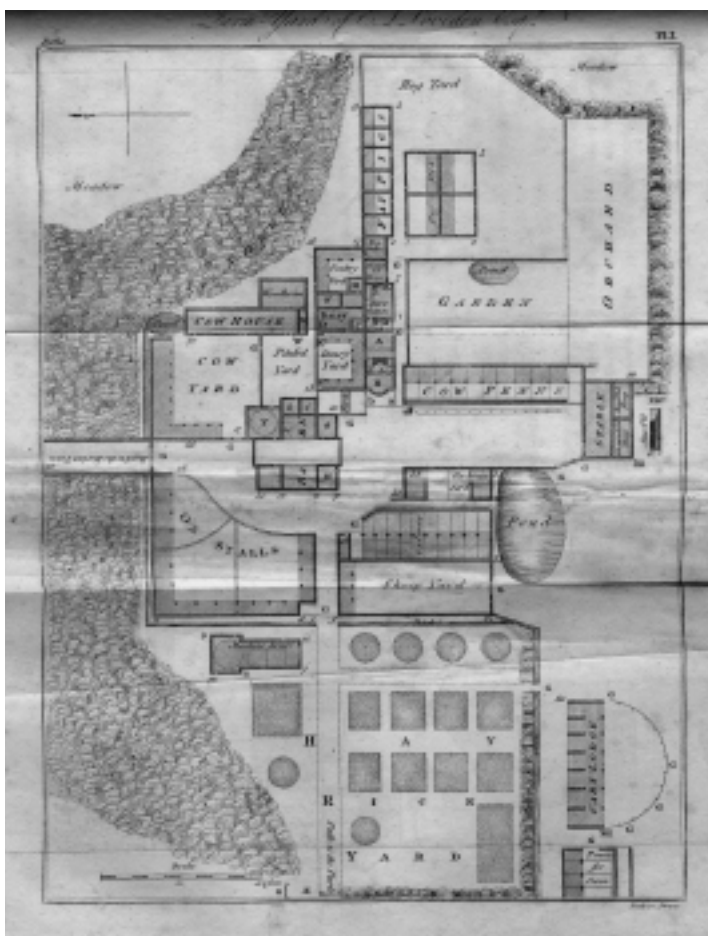
The farmers with ordinary farms of 100 to 200 acres occupied a place in scale below. Not for them a life of riding to hounds, but one of effort from them and their families. Nevertheless, their businesses turned over thousands of pounds a year, and usually earned them enough to live a life of frugal

respectability that set them firmly in the middle ranks of village society. They were about on a par with clerks in the towns.

There was a social and economic gulf between the really large-scale farmers and those occupying the smallest acreages. They had in common the name of farmer, but not much else. To many nineteenth-century observers the holders of the smallest farms were barely distinguishable from labourers. Indeed, many of them did spring from the ranks of the labourers, taking on a few acres as a part-time holding and, with luck, building up from that to a full-time occupation of something like 50 to 100 acres. In Berkshire, farming on a small scale was not a strong feature of agricultural life, being confined to a few districts near the towns, in contrast to the Fens or the Vale of Evesham, where small holders were numerous.

This brings us back to the large number of very small holdings: 2,652 of less than 50 acres in Berkshire in the agricultural statistics for 1875. Although recorded as farm holdings, they were not usually reckoned to be full-time occupations. Those who were trying to make a living, from small-scale livestock farming, perhaps, would often have a number of these small holdings. Others who had small holdings did not count farming as their principal occupation. They were butchers, perhaps, who had land on which to keep some of their stock; or publicans, coal merchants, and all manner of village society for whom a few acres were useful.

*A model farmyard on the Buscot Park estate of E L Loveden, MP, as depicted in William Mavor's General view of the agriculture of Berkshire, published in 1809. The farm (which was tenanted) appears lavishly appointed, and was highly praised by Mavor.*



In the nineteenth century most farmers – in broad terms about 90 per cent of them – were tenants, and most held their land on annual tenancy rather than a term of several years. Technically they could lose their farms at the end of any year's term. The landlord-tenant relationship did not, in normal circumstances, work like that, and farmers continued in their occupations from year to year. At the same time tenancies offered flexibility and, although there was much continuity, often from generation to generation, there was also a good deal of movement within the farming population. Farmers enlarged or reduced the size of their farms, moving from farm to farm. Movement was likely to be over a relatively short distance, often within the one estate. Farm records are uncommon in their survival, but estate records are more plentiful, and in

the rentals and surveys, in tenancy agreements, and in letters (though these are less commonly found) it is possible to trace the entry of farming families on to an estate, and the different farms they held.

By 1914 the proportion of farmland owned by its occupiers was beginning to increase. Some of the vast number of acres George Baylis farmed were his own. On the other side of the landlord-tenant equation, Lord Wantage took the unusual step of farming 10,000 acres of his estate on his own account during the 1890s. Greater change was to come after the First World War, when many estates sold some – sometimes all – of their land. Tenants were among the most common purchasers, such that by 1927 more than a third of the agricultural land of England and Wales was owner-occupied.

### *More about farmers and farming*

Agricultural records AD 220-1968  
(or to 1977 in some editions) by J M Stratton

*gives a year-by-year account of weather, crop yields and prices, and events of significance to farming communities. In 1805, for example, Nelson's victory rates no mention, but a late and cold spring is recorded, followed by violent thunderstorms in London in May and July. Readers may find it fascinating to relate such entries to important dates in their own family history calendar. Sadly, this book has been long out of print, but it may be possible to borrow a copy from your public library, or to buy a second-hand copy through Amazon or <[www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com)>.*

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## How do you spell it?

*Peter Francis (2024),  
who chairs the society's Computer Branch,  
wrestles with a problem that has bedevilled  
many family history researchers.*

We often hear in family history circles about the family member who denied any connection with a discovered ancestor on the basis that “we do not spell our name like that”. This article attempts to illustrate the very real pitfalls that lie in the way of anyone who takes surname spelling as an invariant, and it shows that a very flexible approach is required.

This story arises from a long and rewarding search into my wife's Scottish genealogy. Her grandfather was known as Bill **Howieson**, but in his later years, when proof of identity was required for an old age pension, he had to swear on oath that he was baptised as William Gillon Cowan **Neilands**, born on the 24 November 1887 in Dalkeith. This change of name is clearly not due to a spelling variation, but because, as can be seen in the 1901 census, his mother had been widowed and remarried, and “Willie **Neilands**” was then living with his mother and stepfather in the Edinburgh district of St Leonard's. It is his unusual baptismal surname that gives rise to an almost endless set of spelling variants, some of which can be guessed at, but some of which would never have been found without access to the amazing breadth of information available on the internet and on CDs.

William was born the son of Alexander **Neilands** and Agnes McCarter **Cowan**. William's full baptismal name was derived from that of his maternal grandfather, William Gillon **Cowan**, a fairly common naming practice in Scottish families during the nineteenth century. The birth year of his father Alexander is unknown, since no baptismal entry has been found for him, nor for his subsequently discovered siblings. From his death and marriage certificates we can however determine that his parents were

another Alexander **Neilands** and Joan **Denholm (or Denham)**, and that he was born in Dunbar around 1837. It is with this other Alexander **Neilands** that the problems of spelling the surname begin to make further research very difficult. This Alexander (senior) married Joan **Denholm** in Dunbar in 1835. We can find Alexander (senior) in all the census returns from 1841 to 1901. The ages given, along with that on his death certificate put him as being born about 1815. However, a search in the Old Parish Registers (OPR) of Scotland, in the International Genealogical Index (IGI) and in the Vital Records Index (VRI) failed to come up with an eligible candidate, and the parentage shown on his death certificate (a very useful feature of the Scottish registration system) later proved to be wrong.

In the 1881 census a James **Neilands** was shown as living with Alexander (senior) in Dunbar. James was listed as being Alexander's brother, born about 1806, this date being confirmed on his death certificate when it was obtained. On that certificate the parents named were Andrew **Neilands**, a weaver, and Agnes **Neilands** née Woods. As remarked above, the parents of Alexander (senior) proved to be wrongly named on his death certificate, ie, yet another Alexander and a Margaret with no maiden surname. The informant here was one of Alexander's sons-in-law, and his knowledge of the family tree was obviously lacking. This additional information concerning the parentage of Alexander and James raised hopes for going back a further generation, but another search of the IGI, OPR and VRI failed to come up with a James **Neilands** with that parentage born about 1805. One thing that was learned

from these searches however was the seemingly infinite variety of spellings for **Neilands**; a double L; dropping of the D or the S; a second E in place of the A; EE in place of EI and many more. However none of these proved fruitful, and for some time the search was abandoned.

At a later date one of the more useful search facilities of the IGI enabled another chance to make some progress. It proved to be possible (in the Scottish records at least) to search on a child's given name, and the mother's full name. Since in Scottish parish registers the mother's full name is nearly always given, I entered James, born c 1805, and Agnes **Woods** as the mother. The result was astonishing: James, son of Agnes **Wood** and Andrew **Clelland**, was baptised in Dalkeith on 12 April 1807.

**Clelland**, how was this a spelling variant for **Neilands**? Perhaps it had been mistranscribed, a fact of life for family historians who so often have to rely on the labours of others to give them that valuable clue to the next generation. During a subsequent visit to Edinburgh, a microfilm copy of the Dalkeith registers made it clear that this was not a copying problem, but the correct entry. Armed with this information another search was made of the VRI which contains a rather higher percentage of data for Scottish births than might be expected. Putting Andrew **Clelland** and Agnes **Wood** in as parents gave a triple result; James in Dalkeith in 1807; Alison in Haddington in 1813; and the required Alexander, born in Haddington on 28 September 1815. Again, when the original parish register for Haddington was consulted the surname really was **Clelland**. Other subsequent findings for this family were the marriage of Andrew **Neilens** to Agnes **Wood** in Edinburgh in 1804, and the baptisms of Agnes and Margaret **Neilens** in Haddington in 1809 and 1811.

Andrew was baptised on 23 August 1778 at Haddington, as son of James **Nielens** and

Margaret **Anderson**. From the baptisms of his earlier children we find that he and his wife initially lived in Dalkeith. At that time he was a soldier in the Edinburgh militia, and he remained such at least until 1813, since he is then mentioned in the muster rolls of the Haddingtonshire Light Militia. After he left the army, and perhaps before he joined it, he earned a living as a weaver, a trade followed by his father before him. Andrew is mentioned many times in the records of the Weavers Incorporation of Haddington. Here Andrew appears between 1813 and 1822 several times, holding office as key keeper or deacon. Andrew and Agnes had six children, the five mentioned above (James, Agnes, Margaret, Alison and Alexander) and an earlier Margaret, baptised in Dalkeith in 1805. She has not been mentioned before since yet another name variation kept her hidden away. Perhaps I should have guessed earlier that any name beginning with an N might have a variant with a K in front. Yes, that's right; Margaret Anderson **Kneelands** was born on 22 October in Dalkeith, daughter of Andrew **Kneelands** and Agnes **Wood**.

The juxtaposition of variants of **Clelland** and **Neilands** within the family records occurred in the preceding generation as well. James the father of Andrew (also a weaver) was married to Margaret **Anderson** in 1777 in Tranent under the name **Clelland**. James and Margaret had seven children, all baptised in Haddington, six with variations on **Neilans**, and a seventh baptised as William **Clelland**. James himself was baptised under the name **Neilance** in 1755, and further family reconstruction takes us back via several variations in spelling in different generations, to Mungo **Kneelands** born c1635. Subsequent research on the internet revealed that it has been long recognised that **Kneeland** and **Clelland** are related family names. A website devoted to Clan **Clelland** suggests that **Clelland** and **Kneelands** are English and Gaelic equivalents, and gives many examples of very early usage of these

names in Scottish records. If that is true then the dropping of a K in the spelling is no surprise, and the phonetic rendering of **Neelands** can give rise to the many variations that have been found in parish registers and census returns.

This rather complicated family tree reveals how carefully the family historian has to handle the issue of spelling. Spelling in all documents did not become standardised until well into the nineteenth century, and before that we have to rely on the phonetic rendering

carried out by a variety of scribes with wide variation in the extent of their education. I hope that this account stimulates those who are stuck to widen their search, and thus avoid the pitfalls of claiming that “we do not spell it like that”.

#### References

Muster rolls, various. Scottish Records Office GD 302/1  
The Weavers Incorporation of Haddington. Scottish Records Office B 30/18/9  
IGI, International Genealogical Index, Church of Latter Day Saints, internet  
OPR, Old Parochial Registers, Church of Latter Day Saints, fiche  
VRI, Vital Records Index, Church of Latter Day Saints, CD

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## ***Could you/would you write for the Berkshire Family Historian?***

The most important element of the society’s magazine is the input from members. Not every one wants to write a 1,200-word researched article, and contributions in shorter forms are equally valuable.

Have you come across an intriguing entry in, say, a Berkshire parish register, or a snippet in the archived files of a local newspaper? Have you found a Berkshire stray in unusual circumstances far from home? Has your personal genealogical quest taken an unusual turn that would interest the readership in general? Items such as these are always wanted in a variety of lengths, provided that they have a direct connection with the county, and deal with named people.

If you feel more adventurous, and would like to spend some time researching a topic of interest with a view to writing a longer piece, I’d delighted to hear from you. Some advance discussion is advisable, because it would be a shame to spend time and effort on something that has been covered recently, or is already known to be the subject of someone else’s research. It may also be helpful for you to know some details of editorial policy with regard to content and house style before getting to work. If you want some ideas for research I can suggest several subjects which could be developed into interesting articles.

Although members make lively use of the discussion group on the web, the letters page *Write Now* also deserves your support. Not every member belongs to the discussion group – indeed, not every member has a computer. If your enquiry is of a general nature, and not too urgent, a letter to the magazine will reach a wider readership, which may well bring you a fuller response.

Contributions come in all formats: digital, typed and sometimes handwritten. I can cope with most types of submission although, lacking broadband, my mailbox operates a limitation of 3Mb on file size. I cannot guarantee publication of everything that comes in, but I acknowledge all receipts.

There is of course no financial reward, because writing for the magazine, like all other work for the society, is done for love of family history. Fortunately this has not discouraged some distinguished historians who from time to time write articles for us. I tell them they are assured of an appreciative readership of around 2,000 members. So are you.

***Penny Stokes***

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## The Vale & Downland Museum

***Tony Hadland encourages family historians to use an expanding Berkshire history resource in the “occupied north” of the old county.***



Nearly 50 years ago, a local historian rescued the eighteenth-century minutes of the governors of the Wantage Town Lands. They were being used as a doorstep, and she persuaded the urban district council that the town's history should be treated with more respect. The UDC agreed, and a small collection of artefacts was started in the council offices. From that small beginning grew the Vale & Downland Museum, which today attracts 45,000 visits a year, and which in 2004 was runner-up for Best Small Visitor Attraction in the whole of south-east England.

Until 1974, the UDC's museum committee received curatorial advice from the director of Reading Museum. In that year, much to the annoyance of many, the Vale of White Horse became part of Oxfordshire. The silver lining was that the invader provided a part-time permanent curator, the first in the museum's history.

With the uncertainty surrounding the impending boundary changes, the museum committee became an independent charity. A trustee, Dr Richard Squires, suggested his former workplace, the Old Surgery, as a site for the museum. After much negotiation, the new Vale of White Horse District Council bought the Old Surgery site and leased it to the trust on favourable terms. The Carnegie Trust UK gave a grant that enabled the museum to be moved in 1975 from the Civic

Hall to the Old Surgery. Improvements continued, and the museum centre in substantially its present form was opened in 1983. Further improvements were carried out with a grant from the Millennium Lottery Fund.

Today the museum receives some funding from the Vale of White Horse District Council and Wantage Town Council, but it has to pay Oxfordshire County Council for conservation and collections management services. In recent years the major part of the museum's funding has come from its trading activities, principally the letting of its other site, Lains Barn at Ardington, for weddings and other functions.

Emily Leach, until recently education officer at the River and Rowing Museum, is the consultant curator, and she has two part-time assistants. Tony Hadland is the museum administrator, and he works closely with Dot Burrows, part-time community and volunteer co-ordinator. There are about 90 active volunteers, and in 2006 the museum won an Investors in Education award for its contribution to work experience programmes.

The Old Surgery, the part of the museum visible from Church Street, is a converted seventeenth-century cloth merchant's house. From the street the museum looks small, but behind is a modern extension comprising the visitor centre and the galleries, to which is

joined Hunts Barn, an eighteenth-century building which originally stood in East Hendred, and Legge's Cottage, which houses the stores, workshop and library.

The collections principally cover geology, archaeology and social history. Subjects given particularly strong coverage include the Wantage Tramway, the tanning and textile trades, the Oxford Movement, Lord Wantage and his estates, and local engineering, past and present. Some 3,000 items are displayed in more than 3,600 square feet of exhibition space. Exhibits range in size from a tiny Neolithic flint arrowhead to a large nineteenth-century threshing machine. The auditorium shows spectacular aerial views of the Vale and two specially-made films, narrated by David Attenborough. There is also a large three-dimensional interactive map of the Vale, which shows ancient trackways, hill-forts, and communication routes.

The museum has a comprehensive website at <[www.wantage.com/museum](http://www.wantage.com/museum)>. There you can find many interesting articles on local history, researched by museum volunteers. These articles result in queries from all over the world, often from family historians.

Of interest to family historians researching the social and economic history of the area is the museum's small but comprehensive

library, which may be used by prior appointment. The volunteer librarian is Martin Smith, who previously worked at the Bodleian Library. There is also a collection of 10,000 photographs of Wantage and the surrounding villages, indexed on computer. The photo-archivist is Howard Fuller, a volunteer who is also an executive member of Oxfordshire Family History Society. Searches of the photo library can be carried out, and copies supplied for private use or publication.

The Vale & Downland Museum is in Church Street, Wantage, OX12 8BL, a few minutes' walk from the Civic Hall car park and the bus stops in the Market Place. There are frequent buses from Oxford, Abingdon and Didcot. The museum is open all year round, every day except Sundays and bank holidays, from 10.00am to 4.30pm. Admission to the visitor centre, temporary exhibitions and café is free: annual season tickets for the main galleries cost just £1 for young people, £2.50 for adults and £2.00 for OAPs and people with disabilities. You can contact the museum by telephone on 01235 771447 or email <[museum@wantage.com](mailto:museum@wantage.com)>.

The museum is interested in developing its services for family historians and would welcome comments and suggestions.

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## Berkshire then and now

***From Saxon times until 1974 Berkshire had the familiar boot shape shown on the left below. In 1974 the Boundaries Commission lopped off the leg of the boot, including the Berkshire Downs, Wantage, Didcot, Wallingford, Abingdon and the White Horse which was the county emblem, and allocated it to Oxfordshire. Minor adjustments were made elsewhere on the border.***



***In 1989 local government changes led to the abolition of Berkshire as an administrative unit, replacing it with six new unitary authorities.***



## Riverside Cookham a parish portrait



**Judith Mitchell (2031)**  
explores the delights of a Thames-  
side parish that was once much  
larger than it is today

*Down to Cookham, past the Quarry Woods and meadows is a lovely reach. Dear old Quarry Woods with your narrow climbing paths, and little winding glades, how scented to this hour you seem with memories of summer days! How haunted are your shadowy vistas with ghosts of laughing faces! How from your whispering leaves there softly fall the voices of long ago...*

*From Jerome K Jerome's Three men in a boat*

How convenient it would be if we could hear the voices of the ancestors in the whispering woods!

Cookham village was a favourite venue for the popular pastime of boating, which flourished from late Victorian times. With its riverside location, old Holy Trinity Church, the bridge, the school, shops, many pubs (including the quaint Bel and the Dragon) and the Stanley Spencer Gallery, the village is still popular with visitors. However it has changed over the years. Pubs have become restaurants, cafés now serve ethnic food and shops have moved from selling essentials to leisure goods.

Cookham Rise is separated from the village by the moor, which still floods from time to time. Cookham Rise is the place for serious shopping and the train station. The Methodist

church, which was a replacement for the small chapel in Cookham village (now the Stanley Spencer Gallery), and the modern Roman Catholic church can be found in this part of the village.

Climbing a steep hill through countryside brings you to Cookham Dean, once the reputed home of vagabonds and lawless heath-dwellers, but now a scattered settlement with many large houses. Cookham Dean has a church (St John the Baptist), a post office, a school (opened in 1903), a village hall and a few pubs. It still has a rural feel, although this is perhaps something of an illusion.

If you are going on the ancestor trail back through Cookham's past you need to be aware that the ancient parish of Cookham stretched much further than the present village. It was





bounded by the river Thames to the north and east, by the Bath Road to the south, and to the west by a more difficult-to-define line running approximately along the edge of Maidenhead Thicket (notorious for its highwaymen in the early eighteenth century) across Pinkneys Green, along Winter Hill Road and down to the Thames. The rural hamlets of Pinkneys Green and Furze Platt were part of Cookham parish. However the most populous part of old Cookham parish was in the present town of Maidenhead. All of the town north of the London to Bath Road (A4) was situated in the parish of Cookham. Maidenhead had a church for many centuries called St Andrews and St Mary Magdalen, but it was not a parish church. For baptisms, marriages and funerals Maidenhead residents had to travel to Cookham; folk who lived south of the Bath Road had to go to Bray parish church.

In 1835 the Cookham Union Workhouse was built in Maidenhead, a short distance from the London to Bath Road. The workhouse, renamed Maidenhead Union in 1896, replaced the old Cookham workhouse in North Town, Maidenhead. It held the destitute, sick and infirm of the surrounding parishes as well the 180 vagrants a week in the casual ward. The baptism and burial registers of the workhouse chapel (called St Mark's Church and built in 1873) have been transcribed by the Eureka Partnership. Workhouse records are at the Berkshire Record Office (BRO).

The Cookham civil registration district, based on the parish union set up in 1837, included the parishes of Bisham, Bray, Hurley, Shottesbrooke and Waltham St Lawrence and White Waltham. The district remained unchanged until 1894, when Maidenhead borough was established. So censuses prior to 1901 include most of Maidenhead under Cookham, eg North Town is in Maidenhead. In 1896 the Cookham registration district was renamed Maidenhead, but is now called Windsor and Maidenhead. Cookham rural district council continued to administer Furze Platt and Pinkneys Green until the mid-twentieth century.

The Church of England parish boundaries were redrawn when St John the Baptist opened in Cookham Dean in 1844, St James the Less, Stubbings in 1851, St Luke's, Maidenhead in 1869 and St Peter's, Furze Platt in 1928.

In 1838 the Great Western Railway reached Taplow, waiting completion of the famous river bridge. The station for Maidenhead remained there until 1871. In 1854 the Wycombe Railway Company opened a line from Maidenhead Castle Hill – a much more convenient station for Maidenians – to High Wycombe, stopping at Cookham on the way. The coming of the railway enabled the development of Cookham and Maidenhead for tourists and commuting.

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continued from page 25

*St John the Baptist, Cookham Dean*



In 1839 Cookham bridge was built, replacing the ferry. It must be remembered that the other bank of the river is in Bourne End, in Buckinghamshire, and ancestors could easily have moved from one county to another.

Until recent times the main occupations in Cookham were connected with farming. There were a few gentry families in the area, who would have employed servants. There were at various times a forge, a brewery, a gasworks, shoe and paper manufacturing and at Pinkneys Green a brick and tile works. There were many pubs in the village, but care should be taken not to confuse them with ones along the Bath Road in Maidenhead.

Ownership of farms can be traced in the tithe maps of 1843 and the enclosure of the parish, which happened at the very late date of 1852. See <[www.berkshireenclosure.org.uk](http://www.berkshireenclosure.org.uk)>. The lateness of this enclosure preserved much of the common land for local residents, and parts of it are now owned by the National Trust. More information about land ownership from the 1910 survey may be available at the BRO; both that and the agricultural survey conducted in the Second World War are at The National Archives, Kew. The parish of Cookham contained several manors – the

manor of Cookham village was a royal demesne until the early nineteenth century.

Cookham parish registers start in 1655, although partial records exist from an earlier date at the BRO. The late Mr Brooks transcribed the registers, and his work is in Maidenhead Library. Cookham Dean

registers are at the BRO. Records for Maidenhead circuit Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists and for Maidenhead Baptist and United Reformed Churches (formerly Congregational) are at the BRO.

Both Cookham and Cookham Dean churches have burial grounds. A cemetery in Cookham opened around 1900, and is still in use. Maidenhead Cemetery, opened in 1888, may have been chosen by some Cookham families as it contained nonconformist and Roman Catholic sections.

*The Maidenhead Advertiser* was founded in 1870, and it can be read on microfiche at Maidenhead Library. *The Berkshire Chronicle* began in 1825 and is available at Reading Central Library.

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- Ray Knibbs. *Furze Platt remembered*. (privately published)
- Michael Johnson. *Holy Trinity Cookham in ages past*. April 2005

# Gleanings from exchange magazines

## Gleanings

### ***Daphne Spurling trawls the magazines of other family history societies.***

*Several dozen of these titles are received under the FFHS exchange scheme. Newly received issues are taken to branch meetings in Reading and Bracknell, from where they may be borrowed by members. After this circulation they are kept in the Exchange Magazine Archive at the Research Centre.*

After-life: the records of death.

Dyfed FHS, vol 9, no 3, Aug 2006

Beccles parish church of St Michael.

Suffolk FHS, vol 32, no 2, Sept 2006

The National Monuments Record and Genealogy.

Suffolk FHS, vol 32, no 2, Sept 2006

List of English Civil War casualties recorded in Shropshire parish registers.

Shropshire FHS, vol 27, no 3, Sept 2006

Archives for medical professions.

Oxfordshire FHS, vol 20, no 2, Aug 2006

Consistory court records.

Shropshire FHS, vol 27, part 3, Sept 2006

A short guide to researching your First World War ancestry.

City of York & District FHS, vol 7, no 3, Sept 2006

Framework of family history – relations. (Chart specifying relationships from great-great-grandparents to third cousin twice removed.)

Bedfordshire FHS, vol 15, no 7, Sept 2006

Nonconformist ancestors in the north.

(Detailed account of history and resources of many sects in all England.)

Cleveland FHS, vol 9, no 12, page 9, Oct 2006

The Stonemasons Index London.

Westminster & Middlesex FHS, vol 29, no 1, Oct 2006

*Kentish Express & Ashford News* for Saturday 11 March 1882, 1 April 1882, 22 April 1882, 6 May 1882 and 13 May 1882. (About 600 names.)

Hastings and Rother FHS, vol 21, no 2, Autumn 2006

Quarter sessions records.

East Yorkshire FHS, no 108, Oct 2006

Nobody's children – tracing Barnado's boys and girls.

Kent FHS, vol 11, no 8, Sept 2006

Cumbria FHS, no 120, Aug 2006. This issue contains many lists of names including marriages, deaths, medical practitioners 1800-1900, people who travelled or died abroad, and from Ulverston parish magazines.

In the enumerator's footsteps: a health warning. (Hints on trying to find ancestor's houses from census records.)

Lincolnshire FHS, vol 17, no 4, Nov 2006

[Local] Newspapers as a source of information.

Lincolnshire FHS, vol 17, no 4, Nov 2006

Spotlight on Alton Pancras.

Somerset & Dorset FHS, vol 31, no 4, Nov 2006

Somerset snapshot – Street.

Somerset & Dorset FHS, vol 31, no 4, Nov 2006

New to Kew. (Hints for first-time visitors.)  
Nottinghamshire FHS, vol 11, no 12, July/Oct 2006

Were your ancestors in *The Times*? (Hints on how to search.)  
Bucks FHS, vol 30, no 4, Dec 2006

Taverham.  
Norfolk FHS, vol 4, part 8, Dec 2006

The Hertfordshire police force.  
Herts FHS, no 99, Dec 2006

St Ann's Church, Manchester: index to grave

inscriptions. (A to L, with M onwards in next issue.)

The Manchester Genealogist, vol 42, no 4, 2006

West Surrey parish profiles: East and West Horsley.  
West Surrey FHS, vol 33, no 3, Dec 2006

My parish – Wrington.  
Bristol & Avon FHS, no 126, Dec 2006

BFHS outing to Hitchin. (Description of British Schools Museum.)  
Bedfordshire FHS, vol 15, no 8, Dec 2006

Framework of family history – spelling. (Details of phonetic searches.)  
Bedfordshire FHS, vol 15, no 8, Dec 2006

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# Bookends

*Jean Debney reviews some new local and national family history titles.*

**Suttons Seeds – a history 1806-2006**

Earley Local History Group (2006) 210mm x 240mm (8.3in x 9.5in), flexiback, 246pp  
ISBN 0-9540041-2-4

£17.15 posted in UK, £24.15 airmail

To celebrate the bi-centenary of Suttons Seeds, this fascinating and well written book has been compiled from the work of many contributors including a descendant of the family, former employees and Earley Society members. Suttons Seeds were the bulbs in *Beers, Bulbs and Biscuits*, the mainstay of Reading's nineteenth-century prosperity.

Founded in Reading in 1806 by John Sutton, the company sold its products worldwide, and was run by five generations of the family. Since 1976 it has continued to flourish in Devon, albeit without a family member on the board.

The book is illustrated with photographs and extracts from catalogues, and it includes a family

tree with mini-biographies of the Sutton dynasty. The whole is indexed and well referenced. It is recommended reading.


Please also note that Suttons' archives are in the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading <[www.merl.org.uk](http://www.merl.org.uk)>.

**The book of Thatcham: a record of a changing community.**

Peter Allen, Halsgrove (2006) hardback, A4, 160pp, ISBN 1-84114-500-9;  
ISBN 978-84114-500-6

£19.99 from bookshop; please ring for mail order price.

This is an authoritative story of Thatcham, a village which, according to the *Guinness book of records*, is Britain's oldest village. The author has lived there over 30 years, is an honorary member of the local history society and has written several books and articles about the town. Many people





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contributed memories and photographs, making this a very interesting and readable book.

Included is a helpful timeline from c 8400 BC to the twenty-first century, listing the main events in Thatcham's long history.

#### **Past & present maps.**

Cassini Maps (formerly Timeline Maps) price on application to bookshop

This new series comprises four maps covering a 15-kilometre (nine-mile) square area to illustrate urban growth. The maps are taken from the earliest 1-inch Ordnance Survey first edition, new series (1842-1893), revised new series (1895-1905) and the current Landranger series, all reproduced to the same scale as the latter. Historical notes are included, plus links to local history societies.

Berkshire maps available (so far) are

1. Maidenhead, Marlow and Bourne End
2. Newbury and Thatcham.

Others in the series are: Brighton and Hove, SSX; Bristol, GLS/SOM; Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable, KEN; Chatham, Gillingham & Rochester, KEN; Ely, Haddenham and Littleport, CAM; Exeter and Exmouth, DEV; Guildford and Godalming, SRY; Letchworth, Stevenage, Hitchin and Baldock, HRT; Manchester (Central), LAN; Norwich, NFK; Plymouth and Saltmarsh, DEV; Richmond and Ealing, SRY/LND; Portsmouth and Havant, HAM; Taunton and Wellington, SOM.

**Cassini Old Series** (formerly Timeline Maps), scaled to match the present-day Ordnance Survey Landranger maps, are now available for the whole

of England and Wales. Order by quoting the standard Landranger reference number.

£7.50 posted in UK, £8.50 airmail

#### **Berkshire Burial Index**

CDROM fifth edition. Berkshire Family History Society (2006)

£16.60 posted in UK, £18.10 airmail

For update on 2005 edition (please enclose old CD) £4.55 posted in UK, £6.10 airmail.

Thanks to the diligent work of David Wright and his team, another 40,000 burials have been added to this useful and very important resource for family historians. The total coverage, with the new data in bold type, can be viewed on the society's website <[www.berksfhs.org.uk/berksfhs-books/BBICD-coverage\\_Iss5.pdf](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk/berksfhs-books/BBICD-coverage_Iss5.pdf)>

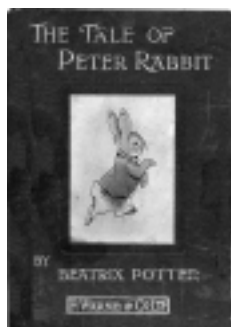
#### **Making information technology work for you (some practical ideas for local historians).**

Suzanna G Burnay. Sigma Books (2006) A5, flexiback, 24pp ISBN 978-905291-09-0

£3.00 posted in UK

This slim, how-to-do-it booklet is written to help you get the most out of your computer, so that you can store and sort your family and local history information. Short sections deal with creating a catalogue on an Excel spreadsheet, indexing a document, making a thumbnail index of your photos and images, scanning, CDs, DVDs and memory sticks and publishing an A5 booklet of (some of) your researches.

Computer whiz-kids stand back; this is something for the rest of us, including myself!



## Literary inspiration from MIs

Five years ago the MI records from Brompton Cemetery in South Kensington were digitised. A local resident thought to peruse them recently, in the light of the recent biopic about Beatrix Potter, which describes her living in the nearby Bolton Gardens before her celebrated sojourn in Lakeland. He reported the discovery of some well-known names:

"I found lots of McGregors, a Jeremiah Fisher, a Brock, and someone with the unusual spelling of Tod. And when I found that a Peter Rabbet was listed in the original burial book as well, I thought this just can't be a coincidence!"

# Write now

## your queries, your comments, your news

Please send your letters to the editor, either by email to <editor@berksfhs.org.uk> or by post to The Editor, Berkshire Family Historian, The Holding, Hamstead Marshall, Newbury, Berks RG20 0HW. Letters may have to be edited, and it will be assumed, unless you ask otherwise, that you are happy to have your postal and email address published for replies.

from **Shirley Mannouch**

My grand-daughter aged 14 is researching her great-grandfather **Samuel Vallis** born Thatcham, Berks 1856, whom we believe to have been the headmaster of the Blue Coat School in Thatcham, but we are not sure of the date.

He was in the parish of Downham, Isle of Ely on the 1901 census, aged 45 with wife Annie.

Our inquiry is twofold: 1) details of Samuel's career and 2) details of the school at the time. She has Googled Blue Coat School, and found some details of the building and the school before Samuel's time, and we have sent emails to the Thatcham Old Blue Coat School Charity, but so far no reply.

Would there be a record of past headmaster/teachers? If so, can anyone point us in the right direction? We would be most grateful for any help given.

---

from **Olive J Samuel** (2809)

Could anyone help me with information regarding the Wargrave workhouse school? The 1871 census shows my grandfather and his two brothers there. They were **Thomas Chastell, Ei Chastell and John Chastell**. Their mother was **Ellen Chastell** of Woodley. She was unmarried but did later marry a Thorpe after he was widowed.

I have no idea who was the father of these children. Would they have been resident at the school? The family legend is that they attended a Blue Coat school. Perhaps they did later.

I would be very grateful for any assistance relating to the Wargrave Workhouse School.

---

from **Mrs Jean Willes** (3099)

I found the following entry while trawling through Kintbury baptisms. I wonder what a Jewish family was doing in a small Berkshire village at this time – possibly escaping from Napoleon?

30 Dec 1805

**NUNES**, Aaron Fernandez Esq

(converted from Judaism at the same time)

Rebecca daughter of Aaron Fernandez Nunes and Rachel

Esther daughter of Aaron Fernandez Nunes and Rachel

Louisa daughter of Aaron Fernandez Nunes and Rachel

Harriet daughter of Aaron Fernandez Nunes and Rachel

All adults converted from Judaism.

5 Jan 1806 Ann daughter of Aaron

Fernandez Nunes and Rachel

21 Jun 1806 Emma daughter of Aaron

Fernandez Nunes and Rachel

**Please note that for reasons of privacy private email and postal addresses have been redacted from this online archive. If you wish to contact someone named in this issue please contact the society.**



# Members' interests

compiled by Bob Plumridge

<bob@theplumridges.com>

Members' interests

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6262	ALDRIDGE	Wokingham	BRK	all				
6262	ALDRIDGE	Remenham	BRK	all				
6208	BACON	Battersea	MDX	1800+				
6208	BREWER	all	ESS	1850+				
6262	CHURCH	Remenham	BRK	all				
6208	DEDMAN	all	MDX	1800+				
6252	DORMER	Hanney	BRK	all				
6252	DORMER	Lyford	BRK	all				
6252	EUSTACE	Hanney	BRK	all				
6208	FIELDER	Isleworth	MDX	1800+				
6230	GARLICK	Sutton Courtney						
			BRK	pre 1900				
5994	GRAVES	Sampford	ESS	1800-1880				
5994	GRAVES	South West	LDN	1800-				
6208	HALFPENNY	London	MDX					
				1800+				
6276	HEADACH(E)							
		Hampstead Norreys						
			BRK	1810-				
6276	HEADACH(E)							
		Shaw	BRK	1810-				
6276	HEADECH(E)							
		Hampstead Norreys						
			BRK	1810-				
6276	HEADECH(E)		ShawBRK	1810-				
6251	HEATHER	all	all	1750-1910				
6276	HERRIDGE		ShawBRK	1810-				
6276	HERRIDGE		Hampstead Norreys					
			BRK	1810-				
6126	HEWETT	Reading	BRK	1800-1850				
6126	HUTCHINS	Newbury	BRK	1800-1870				
6239	IRESON	Chieveley	BRK	1800-1890				
6239	IRESON	Hermitage	BRK	1880-1885				
6239	IRESON	Speen	BRK	1850-1851				
6239	IRESON	Courage	BRK	1840-1841				
6239	IRESON	Clerkenwell	MDX	1840-1860				
6239	IRESON	Chieveley	BRK	1700-1790				
6208	JONES	Isleworth	MDX	1800+				
6190	KEAT(E)S	Bisham	BRK	1750-1950				
6190	KEAT(E)S	Cookham	BRK	1750-1950				
6208	KIMBER	Sutton	SRY	1800+				
6208	KIMBER	Sheerness	KEN	pre 1800				
6208	LINCH	Eiling	HAM	pre 1850				
6208	LINCH	Holyood	HAM	1850+				
5994	MAYES	Wimbledon	SRY	1750-1990				
6252	MIDDLETON							
		Hanney	BRK	all				
6208	PAYNE	Millbrook	HAM	1830+				
6208	PAYNE	Beaulieu	HAM	pre 1830				
6255	PEBWORD		all	all	all			
6255	PIBWORD		all	all	all			
5942	QUELCH	all	BRK	all				
6126	READING	Chesham	BKM	1830-1880				
6208	RIVERS	Hamstead Norreys						
			BRK	1800+				
6208	SAMSON	Allerlon	DOR	1800+				
5994	SHORE	West Lavington						
			WIL	1700-				
5994	SHORE	Wimbledon	SRY	1870-				
6232	SYRETT	Datchet	BRK	1900-1935				
5994	WARE	Battersea	LDN	1850-				
5994	WARE	Tiverton	DEV	1750-1900				
6208	WHITNEY	all	MDX	1800+				
6208	WITCHER	London	MDX	1800+				

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The Research Centre comprises two floors, with books, films and microfiche on the first floor in the library, and the administration, signing-in desk and the computer suite on the ground floor. The centre is open to members and the general public as follows:

Tuesdays 10.00 - 16.00, 19.30 - 21.30  
 Wednesdays and Thursdays 10.00 - 16.00  
 2nd and 4th Sundays each month 11.00 - 16.00

Please note the Research Centre will close on the second Sunday in April (the 8th, which is Easter Day).

All staff on duty are volunteers who help researchers in the centre, but they do not carry out research for the visitors. Visitors can join the society when in the centre or through the website.

The computer suite includes three computers set up specifically for the Ancestry Library edition, for which a nominal charge of £1.00 per hour is made. This gives access to all the the census returns from 1841 to 1901 plus anything and everything else available through Ancestry. These are topped up by some other counties' census returns dated 1861, 1871 and 1891 and the 1881 census returns for the whole of the UK, including the Channel Isles and the Royal Navy, on all the computers. Also held electronically are the Vital Records Indexes for the UK and some other parts of Europe, the National Burial Index and the more up to date Berkshire Burial Index, and much other material by county, either in the memory or accessed by inserting the relevant CD-ROMs. The Berkshire Name Index is available on all the computers.

In the reference library are held copies of almost every England and Wales 1851 census return transcribed and issued as indexes (booklet or fiche), together with the Berkshire census returns for 1851 to 1881 on film. All other England and Wales county fiche holdings, such as parish register transcriptions, are in the reference library, together with books covering every county, plus much on Scotland, Ireland, the Commonwealth and north American countries. The library catalogue can be browsed online.

## Research Centre tours 2007

The next tour is to held be on:  
 Monday 14 May 19.30 to 21.30

## Change of membership details

Please advise changes of address, phone no etc to MC, The Treasurer, Berkshire FHS at the Reading address at the top of this page.

## How to find us

We are close to the centre of Reading, next door to the Berkshire Record Office and in the same building as the Reading Register Office. The station is a 15-minute walk away, and we are on more than one bus route. There is good parking; follow the signs to the Berkshire Record Office.

## Berks FHS Bookshop

The bookshop is on the ground floor, and is always open during centre opening hours. Purchases can be made and paid for by cash or cheque backed up by a cheque card. The bookshop is also available for purchases on our website, which lists the most commonly required publications. Publications for sale include those for beginners as well as for more established family historians. We hold publications on Berkshire family and local history, particularly those published by local societies, whether in print, fiche or electronic format.

## The Berkshire Name Search (BNS)

This is the master index for all the following indexes. To search this index you may:

- do your own search at the Research Centre
- visit a Berks FHS stand at a family history fair
- request a postal search.

The BNS consists of the following:

### *Berkshire censuses and indexes*

1851 census transcription, fully checked, of the 173,748 persons within Berkshire on the night of 30 March.

1861 census transcription and index includes most individuals (the town of Reading is the major exception).

1871 census transcription and index is completed and mainly checked.

1881 census transcription and index is fully checked.

Printouts can be made as required from all these transcriptions.

### *Berkshire Marriage Index*

Work is in progress transcribing and checking all pre-1837 parish registers, with over 95,000 entries now available. Note that the early register entries only give dates and names of the groom and bride. Later entries include their parish if applicable, and whether married by licence.

### *Berkshire Burial Index*

Work continues transcribing all Berkshire burial registers, with over 471,000 entries to date. Some 50 per cent of the entries show all the data available. The rest show (where available) name, age, relationship, occupation and title together with a note indicating if there is further information such as date, place or cause of death in the original record. The fifth edition of the index is available on CD-ROM from the bookshop.

### *Berkshire Strays Index*

This dataset includes 20,500 people recorded in events taking place outside Berkshire if the person has some reference to Berkshire. Strays records come from a variety of sources including the 1851 censuses of several neighbouring counties. No further additions are being made to this index.

### *Berkshire Miscellaneous Index*

This dataset is based on the former Berkshire Name Index and includes 100,279 records that were extracted and submitted by individuals. When possible, running sets (such as baptisms from a parish register) will be placed in specialist datasets, leaving the disparate individual records and small datasets in this miscellaneous index. The amount of information available depends upon the record.

## Postal search

Please address your envelope with the initials relating to your enquiry as underlined below:

Berkshire Name Search: BNS

other county census indexes searches: OCCI

Strays index: Strays

members' interests: WS/MemC

to Berkshire FHS, Yeomanry House, etc with these initials preceding the society title. Please supply your email address, and enclose a bankers' draft or sterling cheque drawn on a London clearing bank to the value of £2.00, and an A5 (240x165mm) self-addressed envelope, stamped if a UK return address, or an envelope of any size and two IRCs if an overseas return address.

## Charges

To search the BNS send £2 per surname requested to obtain the number of entries in each census or index. This search will not provide any information from the records.

To obtain the full details from the records, printed on an A4 sheet (up to 25 entries or lines; we will advise the additional costs if more entries are found) send:

- £2 per surname per requested database
- £5 per surname to search all databases currently available (price will increase as more databases are included).

## Records wanted

If you have records of any names that would fit into the Berkshire Miscellaneous Index (event occurs within Berkshire pre- and post-1974), please send them by post to Berks FHS, Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ or by email to <miscindex@berksfhs.org.uk>.

## Birth Briefs Index

Birth Briefs are five-generation ancestral charts submitted by members of the society. Fully completed charts contain the names and vital records (birth or christening, marriage and death or burial) of the member and up to 30 ancestors.

You can search the index, currently 28,595 names, on the website or for £2 per surname by post. You can order a copy of a particular Birth Brief for £2. Quote the ID no. obtained from the website or from the postal search. The Birth Brief can be sent as a hard copy, in PAF Pedigree format or as a file in GEDCOM format.

Please post search requests and orders for copies to Berks FHS (BB), Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TJ. Mark your envelope BB and include the ID no. if known. Enclose a sterling cheque, drawn on a UK bank, your email address and an A4 self-addressed envelope either stamped or containing two IRCs.

You can contact the person submitting the Birth Brief if they are still a member. We will pass on a letter, or email if they have an email address. (See website.)

To contact the person submitting the Birth Brief you may either:

- send your letter with two unstamped envelopes, one self-addressed and one blank, with three IRCs (not stamps) to Berks FHS (BBxxxx) at Yeomanry House, 131 Castle Hill, Reading RG1 7TG
- email your message to [BBxxxx@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:BBxxxx@berksfhs.org.uk) (where xxxx is the BB ID no.)

**The No.1 Supplier to Genealogists for Microfiche Readers**

## **Why You Need A Microfiche Reader**

Contrary to popular belief, not all information is available on CD.

There is a vast amount of research and records that are only available on microfiche. The information on a microfiche compliments that on a CD.

A microfiche is often cheaper than a CD. Microfiches are available to search small areas of information whereas a CD you have to search a huge complicated database.

Most microfiches are copies of the original documents.

You can check what the original documents actually showed – very useful in the case of name changes, spelling mistakes or not clearly written details. Microfiche readers are small and compact, user friendly –switch on, insert the microfiche and you are on your way.



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